TITLE: A Heated Controversy in the Second/Eighth Century: Khalq al-Qur?an (The Createdness of

Qur?an)

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Abstract

Throughout the history of Islamic thinking, the issue of createdness of Qurʾān - which results from the discourse of the denial of divine attributes and which was first raised as a question by Jaʿd b. Dirham and followed by Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d.128/745-46) and Bishr b. Ghiyāth al-Marīsī (d. 218 or 219/833-34)- has been one of the oldest debates raging within the Islamic scholarly circles. When political conspiracies were involved in the issue, the debate became even fiercer and led to bloodshed and torture among Muslim communities causing the death of many eminent scholars in the 2nd/8th century. One of the reasons why all these debates did not reach a conclusion is that the concepts had not been sufficiently analyzed and the attribution of false or different meanings to the same concepts under discussion. Each sect or group attempted to resolve the issue within the framework of their own background, cultural structure and most importantly, their own principles. The different views put forward on the issue of createdness of Qurʾān are largely related to the kalām attribute, and it is based on the acceptance of the kalām as a essential (dhātī) and active (fiʿlī) attribute. Although the explanations are different, all sect or group accept that the Qurʾān is a divine book sent to people by God.

Keywords

Kalām, Attributes,Speech of God, Kalāmullāh, Khalq al-Qurʾān, Createdness of Qurʾān

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2./8. Yüzyılda Önemli Bir Tartışma: Halku'l-Kur'ân (Kur'an'ın Yaratılmışlığı Meselesi)

Öz

İslam düşüncesinde, -ilk defa Ca'd b. Dirhem tarafından tartışılan, daha sonra da Cehm b. Safvan (ö.128/745-46) ve Bişr b. Gıyâs el-Merîsî (ö. 218-19/833-34) tarafından sürdürülen ve ilâhî sıfatların inkarıyla sonuçlanabilen- Kur'ân'ın mahluk olup olmadığı meselesi, uzun süre tartışma konusu olmuştur. Meseleye siyasî çekişmeler dahil edildiğinde, tartışma daha da şiddetlenmiş ve 2./8. yüzyılda İslam toplumunda bu tartışma kan dökülmesine, birçok âlimin işkenceye maruz kalmasına hatta ölümüne yol açmıştır. Halku'l-Kur'ân meselesinde süre gelen tartışmanın sonuçlanamamasının sebeplerinden biri, problemin temel kavramlarının yeterince analiz edilmemesi, kavramalara yanlış veya farklı anlamların yüklenmesidir. Her mezhep veya grup, problemi kendi dinî ve teolojik kaygıları ve en önemlisi de kendi ilkeleri bağlamında izaha kavuşturmaya çalışmıştır. Halku'l-Kur'ân konusunda ileri sürülen bu farklı görüşler, büyük ölçüde kelâm sıfatıyla ilgisi olup kelâmın zâtî veya fiilî bir sıfat olarak kabul edilmesine dayanmaktadır. İzahlar farklı olsa da tüm taraflar, Kur'ân'ın Allah tarafından insanlara gönderilen ilâhî bir kitap olduğunda mutabıktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Kelâm, İlâhî Sıfatlar, Kelâmullâh, Halku'l-Kur'ân, Kur'an'ın Yaratılmışlığı

Introduction

The nature and validity of divine attributes ascribed to God to make His being intelligible has long been a controversial issue among Muslim scholars and philosophers.[1] The issue of God's speech *(kalām Allāh)* as an attribute of God —considered fundamentally problematic as an attribute of God— and whether the attribute bears an eternal meaning as other attributes do, and whether it has a correlation with His nature, have been questions that have been pondered on by many Muslim scholars.[2] While discussions on the nature of His kalām attribute continue, the different camps on this discussion have inevitably led to a very closely related topic, the nature of the Qurʾān that is considered to be His revelation (wahy). While some sects and scholars advocate *the* doctrine *of the* created Qurʾān *(khalq al-Qurʾān)* and its temporality on the basis of its created (*makhlūq*) and produced (*muḥdath*) nature, others argue for its precedence and its uncreated (*ghayr makhlūq)* divine Word of God on the grounds of similar justifications and discourse.[3]

Trying to establish a similarity between God's speech *(kalām Allāh)* and the speech of man causes different theological and metaphsical problems. If the God's speech is similar to the human speech, it is

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unthinkable to be eternal (*qadīm*). Since it is unthinkable that similar ones are different in eternality and createdness. However, if God's speech is different from the human speech, it cannot be comprehended by man; because God's speech is the name of what is heard. Apart from these, if we consider that there is another sound in the metaphysical universe other than the sound heard in the physical universe, we have to accept that it may have other colors and meanings, which would be impossible to mention any criteria.[4]

This study concentrates on the issue of the createdness of the Qurʾān as it relates to the creation of the kalām attribute rather than the eternality of kalām, the temporality of kalām or its relation to the nature of God. Before describing the emergence, the development and the historical course of the issue which caused deep debates among Islamic scholars throughout the historical period of Islamic philosophy, clarification needs to be made on the two fundamental perceptions regarded as the salient point of the topic under consideration. Behind the reasons for these explanations first lies the fact that the discussions on the createdness of the Qurʾān did not reach a conclusion due to misinterpretation on the meanings of the same words as well as the way principles and concerns are being processed by the arguing schools, who built the doctrines upon concepts which were not thoroughly analyzed. The unrestricted (mutlaq) use of words and their restricted (muqayyad) uses are different from each other.[5] Secondly, they identified the attribute of speech with speaking and did not see that the attribute of speech could be a reason or a means to speak.[6] Therefore, it is necessary to determine which terminology or concepts were used from the 2nd/8th century AH onwards, and to question the correctness of the notions and the meanings they carried, as these exercises determine the course of their debates and the conclusions they would lead into.

1. Conceptual Frame

1.1. The Makhlūq (the Created) and Ghayr Makhlūq (the Uncreated)

When the discussions on the Qurʾān that took place between in the 2nd/8th and the 4th/10th century are examined, it is obvious that the reason for not reaching a consensus or conclusion is insufficiently analyzed notions, as well as the issues arising from different meanings ascribed to the same concepts. Each and every part of the discussions tried to solve the issue in the light of its own knowledge, cultural structure and adopted principles. During these more or less two centuries, the common denominator of verbal and written debates was centralization of the terms created (*makhlūq*) particularly by the Muʿtazila and the uncreated (*ghayr makhlūq*) as two presuppositions. Since the beginning of the 2nd century AH, the discussions that were made through the 'risalāt' or between the experts on the science of ḥadīth and the Muslim jurisprudence that represented the Salafī, as well as the Muʿtazila, were focusing on whether Qurʾān as being "the created" is appropriate terminology.

As far as the interpretations of the phrases the *makhlūq* and the *ghayr makhlūq* are concerned, there seems to be a difference in the interpretation between the Salafī and the Muʿtazila. This difference is closely

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[4]   Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, Critical ed. Abdulkerīm Osman (Cairo: Maktab al-Vahba, 1996), 549.

[5]   Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, 47.

[6]   Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*, 88, 89; Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 2/178, 179, 247.

related with the meanings that each word attributed to the revelation (wahy), the way they commented on it and the nature of the revelation perse.[7]

The Salafīyya, one of the schools, interprets the Qurʾān or the *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* as having no connection with God's attribute *al-Khaliq* (The Creator), that is, it bears no similarity to anything to do with "createdness".[8] On the other hand, the term "the created" has different meanings for the Muʿtazila, and some of the meanings used can be translated as "to make", "to create", or "to set up". Through these meanings, they concluded that the term "makhlūq" meant that God created and set up his own *kalām*, hence He is the speaker. And in contrast with the Salafī and the Ahl al-Sunna, the Muʿtazila regarded the phrase "it is created" in a certain time period as the creation of the Qurʾān, i.e. a form of sound was for the purpose of communication with mankind. Therefore, Muʿtazila supported the view that *kalām* was the created thereafter.[9] Yet the Salafī and the Ahl al-Sunna, in contrast with Muʿtazila, claimed that God's *kalām* attribute meant that He is the al-Mutakallim with his own voice of which its nature is incomprehensible. Based on this standpoint, God did not create Qurʾān the way He created the rest of the beings and the Qurʾān is a *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* revealed by God through its incomprehensible nature.[10]

In this context, it is possible to say that there are three different standpoints adopted by the *kalām* schools on the issue of the createdness of Qurʾān. First of them is presented by the Muʿtazila who takes the words literally as their basis: *kalām* as a particular structure, a system consisting of letters which are arranged in a way that brings meaning.[11] The second one proposed by the Ashʿariyya who takes the meaning as their basis and states that the meaning of *kalām* is indicated by signs and phrases identified by the grammar and that it exists with its subject. Ashʿarī accepts that the reading of God's word at mihrab (niche of a mosque) and written in the mushafs (texts) as the created.[12] And the third and the last standpoint is by the Salafī who defended both, the word and the meaning, i.e. the Qurʾān as letters, verses, words and meaning. It is *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* and therefore is the uncreated. According to Hashviyya and Ibn *Kullāb* (d. c. 241/855) attacked the teachings of Jahm and the Muʿtazilīs about the created Qurʾān. the Qurʾān read in the mihrabs and written in the mushafs is not created and is existed by God. Many of Ibn Kullāb's views were developed and became normative in the third/ninth century, in the new

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[7] ʿAbdulazīz b. Yaḥyā b. Muslim al-Kinānī, *al-Ḥayda wa al-i'tidhār fī al-raddi ʿalā man qāla bi khalk al-Qurʾān*, Critical ed. Ali b. Muhammed b. Nāṣır el-Fakīhī (Madīna: Maktab al-Ulūm wa al-Ḥikam, 1423/2002), 43, 80.

[8] al-Kinānī, *al-Ḥayda*, 41; Hakkı, İzmirli İsmail, *Yeni İlm-i Kelâm* (Ankara: Umran Yayınları, 1981), 2/114.

[9] Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-l-ʿadl*(Cairo, s.n., 1961), 5/3-4; For more information: Jan R. T. M. Peters, *God's Created Speech: A Study in the Speculative Theology of the Muʿtazilī Qāḍī l-qudāt Abū Hassan ʿAbd al-Jabbār bn. Ahmad al-Hamādanī* (Leiden, s.n., 1976); Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, 544.

[10] al-Kinānī, *al-Ḥaydas*, 41; Abū Mansūr al-Māturīdī, *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān*, Critical ed. Majdī Bāsalūm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 2005), 3/273.

[11] Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 2/247; Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī*, 5/6; Aslan, "Kelamullah Tartışmalarında Dilbilimsel İçeriği", 134.

[12] Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, 527, 708; Abdulmālik Al-Juvaynī, *Kitāb al-Irshād ilā qaw'id al-adille fī uṣul al-'itikād*, Critical ed. Muhammad Yusuf Mūsa, Alī Abdulmunīm Abdulhamīd (Cairo: al-Maktab al-Hanjī, 1959), 104; Aslan, "Kelamullah Tartışmalarında Dilbilimsel İçeriği", 134.

school oftheology founded by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/935–6).[13] While the Muʿtazila try to overcome the issue of the createdness of the Qurʾān by separating the attribute of *kalām* and the act of speaking itself and by building a relationship of process and action (creation); the Ashʿariyya, the Māturīdiyya and the Salafiyyah try to reach a resolution by dissolving the *kalām* and the act of speaking into each other.[14]

When it is viewed through its contextual meaning, *kalām* can ascribe different forms yet it is essentially "unique". On the other hand, as far as the "word" is literally approached, *kalām* and its internal and simple unity (*Kalām al-nafsī*) may express multiplicity in meaning depending on the difference in the language of the revelation. Within this context, *kalām*, according to the Ashʿariyya approach, is accepted as the meaning and the attribute which exist in and within a person (self, subject or mind). *Kalām* cannot be reduced to a meaning that consists of letters and sounds that are permanent with the speaker's existence.[15] According to the Muʿtazila's approach, it is a reference system with its own rules of construction and phonetics and is independent from the subject.[16] A word is what is made up of a combination of two or more letters, or a special order of certain letters. In this context, the word is the thing in which the meaning of the word or the meaning of this word is revealed.[17] Lastly, for the Salafī, it is regarded as a transcendent *kalām* that is based on the unity of the word and the meaning of which authority descends directly from His nature. Within this definitional framework, the *kalām* discussion by the Muʿtazila is built upon a perception that it is an act of speech whereas, according to the Ashʿariyya and Salafī, it is based on an attribute that exists with the nature of God. This definitional difference between the Muʿtazila, the Ashʿariyya, the Māturīdiyya and the Salafiyyah results from the distinction and the relation between the attribute of speech and what is spoken of.

For the Muʿtazila, the act of speaking and the attribute of speech are completely separated from each other and *kalām* is defined as not only something that was created, but as a symptom as well. Thus, the Muʿtazila has tackled God's *kalām* within a linguistic domain. According to this point of view, God can be described as *mutakallim* when a *kalām* is attached to Him.[18] Since *ḥadīth* cannot be transformed into *qadīm,* God Himself and the *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* which is *created* cannot be imagined in conjunction with each other. This shows that God spoke through a *kalām* which He created within an entity and that God is *al-mutakallim.* Hence, according to the Muʿtazila, God speaks by creating His words, and the words came into being, but that does not mean that it requires any organ for its creation. We know the *kalām* of Allah in two ways. The first of these is not possible, but God fulfills His *kalām* in objects such as trees and stones.; the

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[13] Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, 527; Richard C. Martin, "Createdness of the Qurʾān", *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three*, ed. Kate Fleet and et al, Consulted online on 08 October 2019 http://ekaynaklar.mkutup.gov.tr:2097/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_24418

[14] Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, 533; Aslan, "Kelamullah Tartışmaların Dilbilimsel İçeriği", 134.

[15] Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, 527, 558, 708.

[16] Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, 47; Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī*, 5/48, 58.

[17] Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, 47.

[18] Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsa*, 532, 533; Abū al-Muʿīn al-Nasafī, *Ṭabṣīrat al-adilla*, Critical ed. Hüseyin Atay – Şaban Ali Düzgün (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2003-2004), 1/339-342.

second is that what a true massenger informs.[19] This is because all things that come into existence through God exist directly or without a means.[20] Thus, while the Muʿtazila deal with a negative theology on the relation between the speech attribute and the act of speaking per se based on negative theology, the Ashʿariyya and Salafīs share an approach of syllogism and they explain the relation between God's *kalām* and human speech on the same level. Furthermore, while the Ashʿariyya defines *kalām* as the "meaning" signified by letters, the Salafīs try to justify *kalām* as an attribute within the relation of word and meaning.[21] The Ashʿariyya theologians (*mutakallimūn*) are in agreement that the word is named *kalām* in terms of the "meaning" indicated by it. For example, the Ashʿarī scholar Imām al-Ḥaramayn Abū l-Maʿālī al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085) defines the *kalām* as a meaning which indicates and signs an expression that exists with its subject.[22] Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) seem to support the opinion of the Salafīs by saying that that '*Although Qurʾān is not created, it is not different from God. It exists with God.*'[23] As it can be seen, Ibn Taymiyya, one of the Salafī scholars, states that although the Qurʾān is the uncreated, it exists through God himself. As understood, the definitions of *kalām* and its nature understood by schools are fundamentally different. Therefore, and naturally, the opinions made on Qurʾān and its true nature are also dissimilar.[24] While Muʿtazila tackles *kalām* based on literal speech, the Ahl al-Sunna mainly claims that *kalām* is an attribute or meaning which exists through the speaker.

1.2. The Beginning and Historical Development of the Createdness of Qurʾān Issue

The issue of the createdness of the Qurʾān as it relates to God's *kalām* attribute reached a high point in the history of Islamic theology to a point of unprecedented arguments, torture and declaring each other unbelievers.[25] Worst of all, and particularly when the right for free speech was taken away, the issue turned out to be a deadlock by "Miḥna Events"[26] which was caused and supported by the caliph. In other words, the events became even more problematic and atrocious because of the Caliphate governance's bias who was supposed to be neutral, thus causing theological arguments to turn into a political debate.[27] This conflict continued until the caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 232–47/847–61) released a decree on 848 forbidding any discussion on the nature of the Qurʾān.[28] Thereafter, the peaceful discussion between Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī (d.

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[19] Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Sharh al-Usūl-ī Khamsa*, 539.

[20] Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Sharh al-Usūl-ī Khamsa*, 541-42.

[21] Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Rasāil* (Egypt: s.n., 1349), 2/22; Aslan, "Kelamullah Tartışmalarının Dilbilimsel İçeriği", 137.

[22] Juvaynī, *Kitāb al-Irshād*, 104.

[23] Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿat al-rasāʾil wa-l-masāʾil* (Egypt: Matbaʾa al-Manār, 1964), 35.

[24] Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Muhaṣṣal* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabî, 1990), 402.

[25] Ahmet Akbulut, *Müslüman Kültüründe Kur'an'a Yabancılaşma Süreci* (Ankara: Otto, 2017), 168, 206, 207.

[26] Abdulkarīm b. Aḥmad Shahristānī, *al-Milal wa al-Nihāl* (Egypt: Matbaʾa al-Bulāq, 1263), 68.

[27] Akbulut, *Kur'an'a Yabancılaşma Süreci*, 204-208.

[28] Jamāladdīn Qāsimī, *Tarīḫu al-Jahmiyya wa al-Muʿtazila* (Egypt, n.d.), 52. Aslan, "Kelamullah Tartışmalarının Dilbilimsel İçeriği", 132.

303/915) , Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī (d. 321/933) from the Muʿtazila and the Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 414/1024–1025) and al-Juwaynī turned into a vicious circle of linguistic and theological argumentation.[29]

The argument of the createdness of the Qurʾān was first brought systematically into question by Jaʿd b. Dirham (d. 124/ 741) who an Umayyad-era heretic was and known for his rejection of divine attributes specifically God's speech. By the order of the Caliph Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 105–125/724–743), he was beheaded after being put to exile due to his discourse. Then, Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 128/746) emerged as his follower and further systematized the discourse. Some sources claim that Jaʿd served as a tutor to the future caliph Marwān b. Muḥammad (r. 127–132/744–750), and perhaps for his sons. Jaʿd introduced his opinions about the attributes and the createdness of the Qurʾān during Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik, who captured him and sent him to Khālid al-Qasrī, the governor, who exiled him. Later, by Hishām's order, he was beheaded on the first morning of 'Eid, the festival of sacrifice.[30]

The following is Ibn Taymiyya's views on the account mentioned: Jaʿd b. Dirham was the first to come up with the opinion about Qurʾān's createdness at around year 120. He was then followed Jahm b. Ṣafwān. Jaʿd was killed by Khālid al-Qasrī. And Jahm was killed during the reign of Merv on Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik.[31] al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153), similarly, accounts as follows: Jaʿd b. Dirham is the first to come up with the view about Qurʾān's createdness.[32] So far, the resources that dated to this first century demonstrate that Jaʿd b. Dirham is the chief architect of the issue of the createdness of the Qurʾān. However, questions can still be raised on the possibility that Jaʿd b. Dirham could have taken up this view from another person or from the internal discussions of another religion and whether or not he came up with this thesis all by himself. Aḥmad Amīn (1886–1954) was an Egyptian scholar claims with regard to his opinion the origin of createdness of the Qurʾān is outsourced. According to him, Jaʿd b. Dirham was under the influence of Jewish and Christian theology and he took this issue from them. As a proof, he quoted the caliph al-Maʾmūn, who had a high interest in theology and philosophy, arguing that Qurʾān is the uncreated are similar to those saying Jesus is God's son, which means as Jesus being God's word, he is the uncreated too.[33]

This statement may seem reasonable; for during the reign of al-Maʾmūn many studies from different languages and cultures were being translated into Arabic. Besides, it is also possible that Muslim scholars are influenced by the increased conquests of the caliph ʿUmar, which caused an exchange of ideas as a result of encountering and adopting different cultures and views of different religions and communities, whereas some of those cultures and communities also accepted Islam.

After Jaʿd b. Dirham's initial effort to develop this doctrine, Jahm b. Ṣafwān systematized the contention of the non-createdness of Qurʾān and found supporters in the course of time. Regarding some

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[29] Aslan, "Kelamullah Tartışmalarının Dilbilimsel İçeriği", 133.

[30] Watt, M. *İslâm Düşüncesinin Teşekkül Devri*, trans. Ethem Ruhi Fığlalı (Ankara: Umran Yayınları, 1981), 305-306; Steven C. Judd, "Jaʿd b. Dirham", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three,* Consulted online on 07 October 2019, http://ekaynaklar.mkutup.gov.tr:2097/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_30760

[31] Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Rasāil*, 3/120-132.

[32] Shahrisṭanī, *al-Milal wa al-Nihāl*, 1263, 86.

[33] Aḥmad Amīn, *Ḍuḥā al-Islām*, 147.

narratives, after Jahm b. Ṣafwān was killed by Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik in Merv, the doctrine was defended by Bishr al-Marīsī (d. 218/833). Even though, in the course of developing and spreading of the doctrine, Bishr al-Marīsī could not meet Jahm b. Ṣafwān and he did not take the standpoint (of the doctrine) from him literally, yet he did it with the help of the citizens of Jahm and the supporters of Jamiyyah. Bishr had in a philosophical sense systematically discussed the subject in all aspects with his opponents and tried to spread as well as justify his reasoning. Sometimes, he was assisted by the statesmen. As it was historically recorded, Bishr was of Jewish origin and during the reign of the ʿAbbāsid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 170–193/786–809) or the caliph al-Maʾmūn (r. 198–218/813–33) (according to some other resources) he defended and developed this doctrine for about 20 years. Based on this historical study, it is reasonable to suggest that the thought and the scholarly work on the createdness of Qurʾān issue was first developed by Jaʿd b. Dirham, then followed by Jahm b. Ṣafwān, Bishr al-Marīsī and when this thought reached the Muʿtazila, the school adopted this idea as one of their basic doctrines. This doctrine was first learnt from their affiliation with the Jahmiyya, and then it was systematized and taught throughout the history of the philosophy by the Muʿtazila.[34]

We have already mentioned earlier that some Islam theologians believed that the createdness of the Qurʾān issue infiltrated into the Islamic community from outside and was supported by some external communities. The doctrine was assimilated into the Islamic community through Jaʿd b. Dirham whose thinking was influenced by the Jewish' and Christians' and Greek philosophical doctrines. Logos, which is considered to be eternal in Greek philosophy, translated into Arabic as "kalām" has pave the way for createdness of Qurʾān issue.[35] Jews believed that the Law had been created before the world; Medinan Jew Labīd b. al-Aʿsam based on the creation of the Torah, he claimed that the Qurʾān is also a created.[36] Christians also believed that the Logos existed eternally in God; one of the Christian theologians clerks in the palace, Yūḥannā al-Dimashqī (John of Damascus) in order to prove the godhood of Jesus against the Muslims, he suggested that the divine words (kalāmullah), namely the Qurʾān, are not creatured.[37] On the other Ibn Qutayba thinks that Bayān ibn Simʿan was the the first person who effected by external discussions said that the Qurʾān was created.[38]

The issue of the createdness of Qurʾān that emerged in the early period of the Umayyads reached the period of al-Maʾmūn via the continuous discussions and various writings related to this topic. The issue, which had been taken up and debated by many, and continued to be observed and dialogued until this very period, developed into a political debate from the later part of the Umayyad when the Umayyad caliphate manipulated the authority of al-Maʾmūn and others and turned the issue into an official discourse employed

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[34] Aḥmad Emīn, *Ḍuḥā al-Islām*, 147.

[35] M. Ramazan Abdullah, 525-526.

[36] Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-tarīkh*, ed. C.J. Tornberg (Beirut, 1966-1967), 7/49.

[37] ʿAmr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ,* Critical ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo, 1979), 3/347; Muḥammad Abū Zahrā, *Tarikh al-Madhahib al-Islamiyya* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, n.d.), 1/157-158.

[38] Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdullāh Ibn Qutaiba, *Kitāb al-Maʿarīf fī ahbār al-ʿarab wa-ansābihim II*, Critical ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Gottingen, s.n., 1850), 148.

in political spheres. Consequently, the issue became a formidable question, a deadlock intermingled by too many factors.

al-Maʾmūn, who was well-known for his interest in theological and philosophical subjects, sympathized with the Muʿtazila who were supporting their views with philosophical and logical methods. Naturally, the Muʿtazila defending the createdness of Qurʾān thesis convinced al-Maʾmūn to accept the createdness of Qurʾān and used him to adopt the contention and to manipulate the authority of the state.

The unforgettable products of this conflicting situation were the "events" that rose from it, "the *Miḥna (Inquisition)* Event", which took place to oppress the opponents by torture in order to force them to give up the idea against official political contention of the state; the createdness of Qurʾān. The createdness of the Qurʾān issue turned completely into a political discourse by encouraging Aḥmad b. Abī Duʾād (160–240/776 or 777–854) as an advisor to the caliph al-Maʾmūn. The scholars of Muʿtazila began to increase their political influence on the state in 218/833. The scholars of Muʿtazila took over the control in order to create official discourse of the state. They made al-Maʾmūn publish a circular and started to torture, put in dungeons and even kill the opponents of the createdness of Qurʾān, which was the official stance of the state. This tyranny in the mind and in the speech continued for 16 years from 218/833 to 234/848–849, including the al-Muʿtaṣim and Waṣil periods. All sources indicate that the scholars were put under pressure and forced to accept this ideology. al-Maʾmūn was not satisfied with all that he did. He issued four decrees in different times to Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm, the region of Baghdad, ordering him to declare, that muḥadīths, kadhis, lawyers and Sufis shall be interrogated in order to find out if they accept the createdness of Qurʾān or not, and if they don't, they shall be punished with imprisonment. Muḥammad b. Nuḥ al-Maḍrūb (d. 218/833), Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād al-Marwazī (d. 228/843),[39] Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Khuzāʿī (231/845) and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) and were the first to be sentenced, imprisoned and tortured.[40]

The struggle of the supporters of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, represented by the Muhaddiths and the followers of the Salafī School, against the Muʿtazila continued within the framework of the letters, *kalām* and words of Qurʾān. While the Muʿtazila insisted that all those mentioned were created, some Ḥanbalis and Salafīs on the contrary, claimed that they were uncreated. On the other hand, the Sufis were quite reluctant to give their opinions. According to this group, declaring opinion on this subject is *bidʾa* (heresy) and if there is something to say on this subject, their stance is that Qurʾān is speech of God *(kalām Allāh)*.[41]

Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/935) who was a student of Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī until he was in his forties, separated from Muʿtazila in 300/913 for not being able to withstand the pressure and the tension asserted

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[39] Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād al-Marwazī, whose collection Kitāb al-Fitan is the earliest extant complete text on the subject, was imprisoned in Sāmarrā for not giving rejecting the caliph request that the Qurʾān was created. After he died in prison (228/843), he was chained and buried, following his will. See. Ali Çelik, "Nuaym b. Hammâd", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2007), 33/219.

[40] M. Qasim Zaman, The Caliphs, the ʿUlamāʾ, and the Law: Defining the Role and Function of the Caliph in the Early ʿAbbāsid Period, Islamic Law and Society, 1997, Vol. 4/1 (1997), 26; Andrew Rippin, Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices (New York: Routledge), 2003, 66; Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, "Halku'l-Kur'ân", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1997), 15/372.

[41] Aḥmad Emīn, *Ḍuḥā al-Islām*, 163.

by the academics and theologians in this academic world and joined the Ahl al-Sunna school. The arguments on the createdness of the Qurʾān started to follow a different course with the Ashʿarī. This difference related closely with the definition of the attribute of *kalām* which described God, the al-mutakallim. al-Ashʿarī, so to speak, divided the elements of the issue and made a classification to tackle the issue in a more fruitful way. His work led to the formulation of: *kalām al-lafẓī* and *kalām al-nafsī* which later were often highlighted in the discussions of the issue of *God's speech (kalām Allāh)*. This classification or dichotomy was in fact extremely helpful in facilitating the comparison work in the ability of the human beings to speak and the usage of this classification enabled them to engage in the discourse more effectively. al-Ashʿarī clarified this subject clearly by saying that there are two kinds of *kalām*. The first one is speech with sound and the other one is speech without sound and letter. *Kalām al-nafsī* is a meaning which finds a voice by letters and signs. On the other hand, *kalām al-lafẓī* is signs and letters that signify *kalām al-nafsī* and in that respect *kalām al-lafẓī* is external to the essence of God; hence it is makhlūq (the created). Ashʿarī, in this respect interprets *kalām al-lafẓī* as the words of *kalām al-nafsī*, and *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* as *ghayr makhlūq* (the uncreated). Here the meaning of the signified word was turned into an act of the speaking attribute (*kalām*) and was foregrounded as unique and present with God. Therefore, *kalām al-nafsī* is essentially the word of God. *Kalām al-lafẓī* on the other hand, being the signifier and carrier of meaning, is also the word of God, but in a metaphorical sense.[42]

Ashʿarī in this sense confirmed the Muʿtazila's claim through this classification by confirming that Qurʾān is something that can be written, heard and recited, and hence it is created. Because each word is readable and writable Qurʾān is also characterized with a kind of consequentiality, a combination formed of different parts; as for the meaning which existed with the person (God), it is pre-eternal and existent. Forasmuch meaning is not subject to change depending on the phrases or words. For Ash'ariah, the *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* which indicate by literal words is *qadīm* (pre-eternal) and the meaning exists with God. It is fair to conclude that Ashʿarī tried to reconcile the different stances of the Muʿtazila and Ahl al-Sunna and followed the middle path by dividing *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* that was embraced as *kalām al-lafẓī* by the Muʿtazila and as *kalām al-nafsī* by the Ahl al-Sunna.

While Ashʿariyya approaches the subject by dividing *kalām* into two parts, Fazlur Rahman takes a far different perspective. In his explanation on the integrity of the revelation of Qurʾān and the Prophet, he states that the Qurʾān is purely the word of God in his book called *Islam*. He also remarks that the Prophet's inner world has a close relation with the Qurʾān. Yet this relation cannot be understood as a mechanical relationship as if it was in a record. Rather, divine *kalām* was emitted out of the heart of the Prophet.[43]

Many scholars of Islam discussed the issue with assumptions that the Qurʾān and its relationship to God is an attribute, that the *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* is identified with knowledge of (ilm) God, that it is sent down and is not that of human speech, that the use of derivatives of call in the dialogues between God and the prophet Jesus; and interpreted the verses within this framework and the stance that it is uncreated is supported by the methods based on verses. However, the Muʿtazila regarded Qurʾān as a text consisting of sūras, verses and letters with unity among them, a text that can be written, read, heard and is a miracle of

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42   Abdurahmān al-Jazārī, *Tawḍiḥ al-akāid fī Ilmi al-tawḥīd* (Matbaʾa al-Hadarāt al-Sharkiyya, 1932), 119-20.

43   Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1966), 30-3.

the Prophet; and for this reason, they believe that it is impossible to consider it as an attribute of God or to render it as something that exists with God (pre-eternal). Furthermore, there were efforts to prove the createdness of Qurʾān through inferences from the verses and its temporality, consecutive verses, its assumed send down by God or its proclaimed *naskh* (some verses nullify by other verses) character.[44]

As we have mentioned earlier, the Muʿtazila who described *kalām* based on literally approach, thus, take word's function into consideration, bring forward the following inferences under the title *"Inconsistencies of Kalām Qadīm"*, a negation to justify their claims. [45]

- *Kalām* that consists of at least two letters and sounds is muḥdath. As God's *kalām* in the Qurʾān belongs to this category, it cannot be qadīm. If it is, human's *kalām* should also be pre-eternal. Because they are of the same kind.

- The verses of the Qurʾān ought to be created when the language it employs is considered. Because the language it assumes, bears human characteristics as it is formed by people in consensus. Thus, Qurʾān is *muḥdath* because it addresses humans with their own language.

- Qurʾān should be created since it assumed to be distinct and separate from God. Because Qurʾān has some qualifications such as attributions and sections which are perceptible, muḥkam and mutashabih verses or metaphoric and audible, and it demonstrates a nature of createdness which cannot be attributed to God. If they were qadīm, we would have appointed another pre-eternal besides God.

- *Kalām* is created in terms of its temporality.

- *Kalām* owes its meaning to its structure that is built upon words, which means it is formed by a special arrangement. A word which deprived of this cannot be meaningful. This also demonstrates its createdness.

- Qurʾān's defiance to mankind in some issues is also a proof of its createdness. Because, challenging with something pre-eternal is not only nonsensical but impossible as well. As there is allowance in defiance, Qurʾān should have been created.

- As word is attributed to its owner as an act of himself, *kalām* cannot be pre-eternal; i.e. the words such as *inʿām* (gift from God), *ihsan* (to do beautiful things).

- Suggesting that *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* is pre-eternal despite its being a substance, means that all substances are of the same kind.

- Claiming that Qurʾān is pre-eternal and uncreated would be a deficient attribution to God, because in this case Qurʾān is abstracted from such qualifications as "comprehensibility" and its "benefits". Also, it would be impossible to understand what is meant by divine wish. And whether it is comprehensible or "sent down", can only be perceived through human language it addresses, i.e.,

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[44]   Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawhīd*, 84.

[45]   Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *al-Mughnī*, 5/84-93.

through a created (muḥdath) way. Otherwise, God would have been desiring evil, which would also be *muḥdath*.

It is reasonable to summarize then that the *Muʿtazila* who constituted their basic tenets on the principle of Tawḥīd of the Islamic doctrine had attempted to justify the createdness of the Qurʾān (or *God's speech (kalām Allāh)*) on the basis of the rationale stated above.

According to Ahl al-Sunna, *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* —in other words, *al-kalām al-nafsī*— exists with God's nature and has a meaning which can be expressed with a verse exempt *munazzal* from all deficiencies. This means that its eternal relation can be separated into different parts including prohibition (nahy), command (amr), message (khabar), call (*nidā*), and the like. The Ahl al-Sunna does not find it obstructive or oppose that al *kalām al-lafẓī*, bearing the ordinary qualifications, i.e. those indicating its makhlūq, meaning exists with God. For, the evidence or the indicators that refer to the createdness of Qurʾān in fact belong to *lafẓ* (wording) not to the meaning that exists and pre-eternal with God. Besides, the plurality of *al kalām al-lafẓī* (Qurʾān, Old Testament, Bible, etc) does not at all indicate that the multiplicity of *al-kalām al-nafsī* existing with God himself. The plurality of the lafẓ disclosing only the distinguishable part of *kalām* does not imply the plurality of meaning, the spiritual world of *kalām*. Therefore, the *God's speech (kalām Allāh)*, which is written in the Qurʾān, memorized by hearts and uttered by tongues, is *ghayr makhlūq*. Because *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* is read, heard and read through *lafẓ* or verses signifying a *qadīm* meaning.

That *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* bears this such characteristics does not denote a createdness, in other words its *muḥdath* quality. Just as writing, hearing or pronouncing a sentence like *"Fire has a burning effect"* does not require its realness as sound, letter and system, *kalām al-nafsī* reflecting the *kalām* meaning by Ahl al-Sunna cannot be fully understood by linguistic terms.

al-Nasafī, in his *Ṭabṣīrat al-adilla*, describes the *kalām* definition of Ahl al-Sunna in different words to the effect of the same conclusion:

> *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* is an eternal attribute which bears no relation to the system of phonetic or letter codes. The *kalām* attribute exists with God and bears opposite meanings to silence; speechlessness or inability as in naivety of a child, or muteness. With this attribute, God commands, prohibits and calls; this attribute is evidenced by the expressions. Designating the expression as *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* is only because they are indicated by *kalām* (speech). When God speaks in Arabic, they call it Qurʾān; when He speaks in Syriac, they call it Bible and in Hebrew, they call it Old Testament. The difference is in the expressions, not in the attribute.[46]

The Salafīs, who are more conservative compared to Ahl al-Sunna, take another stance. They interpret all of the texts such as ḥadith and verses literally as they believe it is aloof of figurative expressions. The Salafīs, in respect to Ahl al-Sunna followers that chastised the Muʿtazila more strictly. The Salafīs took religious scholars and their transported source texts as their reference and asserted a supremacy over their opponents and their adverse views. The Salafīs, as we stated briefly above, believe that *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* is pre-eternal and *ghayr makhlūq* only because it is related or attributed to God's nature in nasses (divine decrees based on verses) and Ṣunnah.

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46   Nasafī, *Ṭabṣīrat al-adilla,* 1/382-383.

The Salafī, as opposed to Muʿtazila and Ahl al-Sunna, believe that it would be great illusion to abstract word from meaning when considering the realness of *kalām* and that it is absolutely necessary to conceive it holistically in order to understand *kalām.* On the contrary, the Salafīs based *kalām* as an attribute within the unity of word and meaning. Therefore, they did not consider *kalām* as it is seen by Muʿtazila who take the issue on the basis of lafẓ and think God is exempt from all attributes or like Ahl al-Sunna who divide the *kalām* as *al-kalām al-nafsī* and al-kalām al-lafẓī. In other words, the Salafīs take *kalām* without any interpretation or taʾwīl (explanation), i.e. without any deviation. From the standpoint of unitedness of lafẓ and meaning in *God's speech (kalām Allāh)*, the Salafīs define *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* as one single conception or attribute within God's eternal knowledge, take an agnostic attitude towards the way divine *kalām* is spoken and its nature; and claim that the speech of God can no way be figurative or metaphoric.[47]

According to the Salafīs, Qurʾān is *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* both in word and meaning and is a divine attribute of God. Within this context, the Salafīs distinctively from Muʿtazila and Asharies, contend that while considering *kalām*, word and meaning must be preserved and must not be interpreted.[48] Ibn Taymiyya remarks that the Qurʾān is God's *kalām* as a whole -meaning and letters- and Gabriel delivered *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* to the Prophet.[49] In addition to all these, Ibn Taymiyya relates the arguments of Salafiyya and eminent great imams of four schools and he states his opinion as the following:

> The description of *kalām* has been a matter of dispute among men and some interpreted it as "a word signifying a meaning", while others read it as "the meaning signified by a word". For different camps, on the other hand, *kalām* is a conception that covers both word and meaning, whereas still others argue that *kalām*, although it may correspond with meaning or word depending on the situation, is in fact an all-encompassing concept covering both.[50]

As it can be seen, all four schools regard *kalām* as consisting of word and meaning, yet they disagree on the primacy of one over another and on the relationship between the two.

According to Salafīs, *kalām* is an attribute that belongs to the speaker. Accordingly, *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* cannot be separated from its owner (speaker). In fact, God made Gabriel hear His *kalām* attribute. To the understanding of the adherents of this school, it is not appropriate to say *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* has been separated from God's nature and been transfused to prophets. However, the statement that should be made: "He, as *God's speech (kalām Allāh)*, is *ghayr makhlūq*" (Originated in Him and returns back to Him). The statement "originated in Him" means He Himself is the one who speaks; and the statement "returns to Him," means *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* cannot be devoted to muṣḥaf (the Divine Books) or by the mind that memorizes it, i.e. the prophets.[51] So, The God has spoken using the letters and meanings of Qurʾān. The speech there belongs neither to Gabriel to Mohammad.

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47 Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Rasāil*, 1/76.

48 Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad, *al-Muḥīṭ bi-l-taklīf,* Critical ed. Omar al-Sayyīd ʿAzmī - Aḥmad Fuad al-Aḥvānī (Cairo: Dār al-Misriyya, n.d.), 308.

49 Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Rasāil*, 22 etc.

50 Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Rasāil*, 55.

51 Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Rasāil*, 75.

Here lies the reason why Ibn Taymiyya says, God - without relating Qurʾān to time or space - revealed Qurʾān through His own speech and presents evidence by nidā (call—voice) and its synonyms transferred from Qurʾān. However, it is impossible to know whether God spoke through a *kalām* comprising word and meaning. His speech is not a figurative one. He revealed them to prophets. Besides, the Salafī school confirms and insists on the view that Qurʾān - as word and meaning -is God's *kalām* and that God has revealed the Qurʾān through His speech. According to Salafīyya, *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* is pre-eternal in its genus or nature. Salafīs (the earlier religious scholars) do not say, "the word per se is pre-eternal" or "Qurʾān is pre-eternal". On the contrary, Salafīs asserts various accounts like "[it] is *God's speech (kalām Allāh),* revealed (munazzal) or ghayr makhlūq."[52]

Abū Hanifa, who brought forward the opinion of Ahl al-Sunna in its original form, regarded *kalām* as essential attribute among His other attributes is qadīm and that God is *mutakallim* with His essential *kalām* and the attribute is eternal itself.[53] It is claimed that Abū Hanīfa, in the context of the issue of the createdness of Qurʾān, advocates Qurʾān is *makhlūq.* However, the historian, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī defended Abū Hanīfa and clarified him as the following: "As far as the issue of createdness of Qurʾān is concerned, Abū Hanafi is said to contend that Qurʾān is the uncreated (ghayr makhlūq)."[54]

Nevertheless, when a prominent Ḥanafī jurist Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb b. Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī al-Kūfī (d. 182/798) was asked about the createdness of Qurʾān, he asked not to call the Qurʾān with the term "the created". When the same question is directed to Abū Hanīfa, he replied "Qurʾān is makhlūq. Because whoever says that "I swear on the Qurʾān that I am not going to do it" swears in fact on something else than God and everything except God is makhlūq." As stated by Abū Hilal al-Askār, Abū Hanifa uses an analogy ("*swear on the Qurʾān*") related to fiqh and makes a deduction. In other words, in Abū Hanifa's logic, everything except God is makhlūq; and since Qurʾān is something other than God, it is a makhlūq, too." Despite all of the explanations above, we see such statements *in al-Fiqh al-Akbar* which is believed to be written by Abū Hanīfa: "Qurʾān is revealed to the prophets as God's *kalām* which is written in the holy books, memorized in hearts and uttered by tongues. Qurʾān is in the form of a makhlūq so that we can read and pronounce it. However, the Qurʾān itself is ghayr makhlūq."[55]

In order to resolve the paradox between his own expressions above and the statements here, we may have to disregard the claim that al-*Fiqh al-Akbar* is written by Abū Hanifa or what he means is the written words in Qurʾān as in the analogy of "swear" above.

Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/820), on the other hand, tries to be unbiased and follows the midcourse between Salafīyya and Ahl al-Sunna yet he takes a stance when it comes down to the issue of Qurʾān's createdness. al-Shāfiʿī like fuqahā and the muhaddithun, he says "Qurʾān is God's *kalām* and is not a makhlūq." As evidence, he underlines the verse stating, "God spoke to Moses."[56]

[52]   Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Rasāil*, 55; İzmirli İsmail Hakkı, Yeni İlm-i Kelâm, 2/114.

[53]   Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, *İlahi Hitabın Tabiatı*, trans. Mehmet Emin Maşalı (Ankara: Kitabiyat Publications, 2001), 333.

[54]   Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, *İlahi Hitabın Tabiatı*, 333.

[55]   Abū Zayd, *İlahi Hitabın Tabiatı*, 333.

[56]   Muḥammad Abū Zahrā, *Imam Shafiʿī* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1948), 136-137.

At this point, one can speculate that there is another reason why al-Shāfiʿī accepts the statement "God spoke to Moses behind a veil". al-Shāfiʿī was objecting to the claim that "Qurʾān is makhlūq" as stated by the jurist (faqīh) Ibn ʿUlayya (d. 218/832).[57] The latter founded and developed Jahmiyya (upon the doctrine of Jaʿd b. Dirham who first coined the phrase "createdness of Qurʾān in history).[58] al-Shāfiʿī, who confirms the attributes ascribed to God, resorts to nass and Sunnah as the evidence and tries to prove that Qurʾān is not makhlūq. However, he does not attempt to make dichotomy or division as Ahl al-Sunna or other scholars did. According to him, all verses and meanings Qurʾān is God's *kalām* and to deny or reject it is infidelity (takfīr); and to attempt to interpret it through various tawils is *bidʿat.*

During the end of Umayyad reign, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was one of the people who was harshly oppressed and tortured in the event called Miḥna Event (the Inquisition of the Abassid Caliph al-Al-Maʾmūn - known as the one who issued circulars as a result of the pressure of scholars of Muʿtazila of the time who were forced to admit that the Qurʾān was created rather than uncreated). Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was one of the few scholars to refuse it and advocated that all the attributes of God that are stated in the Qurʾān and ḥadīths are in fact His attributes designating His uncreatedness.[59] Also, he regards that all of the attributes including His *kalām* attribute as pre-eternal. Since *kalām* attribute is *qadim* and result of this idea the Qurʾān is *qadīm* and uncreated too.[60]

It is also rumoured that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was in fact silent about the issue and was reluctant to take a stance. The same rumours went on with his claim that he regarded such discussions as bidʿat and preferred to be duly silent and said that he'd rather keep quiet than follow those bidʿat makers. However, Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) opposes this stance based on the presumption that it is difficult for him to remain silent during a period of intense debates. It is particularly clear that this was the reason lying behind the pressures and tortures he went through during *Miḥna (Inquisition)* at Umayyah reign.[61] Those who advocate that he was reluctant to say anything at the time, attempt to prove it by the letters he sent to al-Muʿtaṣim. The letter portrays an imam trying to be reserved about the issue. Another evidence is the following account which Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal brought forward:

> He who says the Qurʾān is makhlūq, he is a Jahmī (from the Jahmiyya). If he is Jahmī, he is kafir.
> And he who says the Qurʾān is not makhlūq, he makes bidʿat.[62]

Ibn Qutayba rejects this account and objects this opinion. Another group, however, claims that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal means that Qurʾān is not a makhlūq all together with the letters, expressions and meanings in it.

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[57] Although Ibn 'Uleyye was accused of adopting the opinion of the createdness of the Qurʾān, he repented that it was due to a misunderstanding, after Emîn, who just became caliph, asked him about it. See. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-ʿIlal wa-maʿrifat al-rijāl*, Critical ed. Waṣiyyallāh b. Muḥammad ʿAbbās (Bombay, 1408/1988), 1/377.

[58] Abū Zahrā, *Imam Shafiʿī*, 136-137.

[59] Muḥammad Abū Zahrā, *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1947), 131-132, 136-137; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Radd ʿalā al-Zanādiqah wa al-Jaḥmiyyah* (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Salafiyah wa Maktabiyah, 1393), 26.

[60] Abū Zahrā, *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, 132.

[61] Miḥna was reversed in 234/848 by al-Maʾmūn's third successor, caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 232–47/847–61).

[62] Abū Zahrā, *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, 133.

To substantiate this, they point at his letters and other accounts delivered by Ibn Ḥanbal. One of the documents mentioned is the letter he sent to al-Mutawakkil (the one who relies on God and therefore trustingly bears those hardships that come his way) who asks him to state his actual opinion and write a text to relieve the pain and stress arising from the issue of createdness of Qurʾān.[63]

The latter appears to indicate two points: Firstly, for Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, who takes sides with the Salafī as his predecessors, believes that Qurʾān is not created. According to him, "Qurʾān is God's *kalām* and God's *kalām* does not indicate a createdness. Rather, it declares His command (amr). Command and createdness are thoroughly different from each other." His inferences take their sources from the nasses[64] in Qurʾān, speeches of ḥadīths and remarks of the companions, saḥaba and tabi'ūn.

Secondly, the letter shows that Ibn Ḥanbal disapproves in analyzing or immersing in such debates and does not want to permit them to be discussed. While he speaks on this matter, he appears extremely reluctant. His actual objective seems to prevent them from any misleading that can be caused by the debaters and to protect people against confusion.[65]

It can be concluded that both sides have good arguments. When an overview is presented on Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal by putting together all of his views and statements, an insight can be drawn that he advocates the standpoint that highlights the Qurʾān as not being created. However, he opted to remain silent due to the chaotic atmosphere and the anxiety present during that period.

Nevertheless, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal made efforts to support his views with Qurʾān verses. Takes the verse "We have made it a Qurʾān in Arabic" (al- Ḥicr 15/91) as example and states that it would be a great mistake to take the word/verb "made/jaʿale" in the verse as an indicator of Qurʾāns' createdness. Or another verse "And they made Qurʾān in parts (15/91), "They made the angels female who are subjects of God the most Compassionate." (al- Zuḥruf 43/19). The word *"jaʿala"* in these verses means in fact *"sammā"*. However, the word "jaʿala" close to the "faʿala" in meaning (as it should be here) can be best exemplified in the verse *"they seal ears with their fingers"* [66] Yajʿalūna means here "faʿala".[67]

Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, points out that the word *jaʿala* in the very well-known verse *"We have made it a Qurʾān in Arabic" i*s used in the meaning of *faʿala* (rendered), not "create/made" as it was supposed. The word *jaʿala* in the following verses also used in the meaning of "faʿala". "We have sent it down as an Arabic Qurʾān, so you people may understand" (al-Shuʿarāʾ 26/195) and again in "Verily, We have made Qurʾān easy, in your tongue, onto your heart in order that they may give heed." (al-Shuʿarāʾ 26/195), and "We have made Qu'rān in Arabic, that ye may be able to understand." (al-Shuʿarāʾ 26/195).[68]

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[63]   Abū Zahrā, *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, 132-136.

[64]   Abū Zahrā, *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, 138-39; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Radd*, 26.

[65]   Abū Zahrā, *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, 133.

[66]   Abū Zayd, *İlahi Hitabın Tabiatı*, 362.

[67]   Abū Zayd, *İlahi Hitabın Tabiatı*, 362.

[68]   Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Radd*, 22-4.

As it can be shown his way of interpretation of the verses, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal can be said to advocate that Qurʾān is not created, that, on the contrary, Qurʾān is qadīm. Yet, it should be kept in mind that, the accounts have strong arguments according to other rumors. Because Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal may actually have kept silent due to his political worries at the time and may have felt it necessary to stay away from such discussion in order not to mislead common people.

According to al-Ghazzālī, who after meticulously studying each of the attributes of God in detail accepted all of them as they appeared in the Qurʾān and ḥadīths as qadīm attributes:

> God Almighty is the One that speaks through a *kalām* idiosyncratic to Himself, that commands, prohibits, promises with Heaven and, threaten with Hell. His speech exists with His own Self and it bears no resemblance to that of humans. His voice is not generated through a vibration in the air or collision of things and his letters cannot be compared to one that is produced by movement of the reciter's tongue and his management of the flow of air in his mouth. The Qurʾān, Torah, Gospel, and Psalms are His Books, revealed to His messengers, upon whom be peace. The Qurʾān is read by tongues, written in books, and remembered in the heart, yet it is subsisting in the Essence of God, not subject to division and or separation through its transmission to the heart and paper.[69]

al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111), like the scholars of Ahl-al Sunna, divides God's *kalām* into *al-kalām al-nafsī* and *al-kalām al-lafẓī*,[70] and stating that the Qurʾān is *kadim* in the meaning sense, he tries to explain his view through *kalām al-nafsī*. From this perspective, al-Ghazzālī concludes that the fact that God's *kalām* is written in the holy books and read by tongues does not demonstrate it is created. For, God's *kalām* does not consist of sound and letters. The dialogue between God and Moses as written in the book is explained by al-Ghazzālī by his comment "Moses has heard God's *kalām* not in the form of sounds and letters." Also, al-Ghazzālī takes the issue of 'contradiction in terms' as his starting point to solve the problem.

Rephrased al-Ghazzālī asks does the *kalām* of God Almighty exist in the holy books or not? If it exists, how is it manifested into something qadīm? If it is not manifested/infiltrated, does it not contradict with ijma (agreement)? He answered these questions by saying: God's *kalām* is written in sacred places, memorized in the hearts and read by the tongues; as for the ink and the words on pages, they are all temporal since they are comprised of similar matter and naturally temporal. al-Ghazzālī also states that there is a difference between the saying that God's *kalām* is written in the holy book and God's qadīm attribute is thoroughly reflected on the holy book; and he supports his point by the analogy of fire. In addition to this, al-Ghazzālī states that he who thinks the act of making sound and dividing it into letters is a qadīm act does not deserve to be addressed or accounted. For this poor man is not aware of what he is saying and is ignorant of the meaning of either letter or ḥadīth.[71]

In order to clarify that Qurʾān is not makhlūq, al-Ghazzālī continued to suggest another solution and says: To understand whether the Qurʾān is God's *kalām* or not, we need to take three points into

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69   Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā al-ʿUlūm al-Dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 1982), 91.

70   Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī, *al-Iqtiṣād fī al-ʿitiqād* (s.l.: Dār al-Maktab al-Ḥilal, 2000), 142-44.

71   al-Ghazzālī, *al-Iqtiṣād fī al-ʿitiqād*, 150.

consideration: *qirāʾah* (recitation), *maqrūʾ* (recited text) and *lafẓ* al-Qurʾān (wording). *Maqruʾ* (recited text) which has been read is the uncreated spoken words originating with God and ascribed to Him as His speech[72]. In other words, *kalām* exists as an eternal attribute with God. The Qirāʾa (reading Qurʾān) is a temporal action which returns to the act one left before. The temporal action simply means that the reader starts or generates the act of reading before the act of reading exists. *Qirāʾa* is simply to restart an act that he did not do before. In other words, this is something perceived by senses. At times al-Ghazzālī says that when one says Qurʾān, he means that it is maqrū and if one indicates this meaning in Qurʾān, he in fact means the Qurʾān *qadim*, not something makhlūq. This is what the Salafīs mean when they say, The Qurʾān, that is, the one that is read as God Almighty's *kalām* is not created. And al-Ghazzālī points out that if the word of Qurʾān is used to indicate the act of *qirāʾa* of the reader, it is impossible think that that reader may have existed before qirāʾa comes to exist. For what does not exist before the existence of ḥadīth is undoubtedly also ḥadīth.[73]

Also, there are divisions and parts which conflict with the attribute of *qadīm* Qurʾān, that they have a beginning and an end, that they are not simplified and so combined that they don't mean anything on their own, and in fact indicate the *kalām* attribute of God. These are the characteristics of *qirāʾa* and manifest the *maqrū*.[74]

The Qurʾān is not created, what is created is in fact is the *qirāʾa* and the *lafẓ* and the meaning is pre-eternal and all the commands, prohibitions, messages and dialogs are pre-eternal too. The question one may ask then is how a message is conveyed by something non-existent, how a command is given to an entity that does not exist and how to forbid that entity to some other languages? The most important question is how does eternal God dialogue with someone that does not exist? al-Ghazzālī answers these questions by using verses such as "Take the shoes off your feet" (Ṭāhā 20/12) and "We sent Noah to his people" (Ṭāhā 20/12) and states that the objections to these verses arise from the fact that they are accepted *kalām* as sound or *lafẓ*. In the nature of God, it means *"We shall send Noah"* and after sending it means *"We have sent"*. According to al-Ghazzālī, speech changes based on the situation whereas the meaning which is eternal with the nature of God does not change.[75]

To our understanding, these explanations however, cause to new problem. After the act has been completed in the sentence *"We shall send Noah",* it is claimed that the sentence turns into *"We have sent",* which is quite problematic indeed. Because there occurs a change in knowledge of God and God's omnipotence and action undergo an alteration depending on the time. And all of this happens not in our mind or knowledge but in His mind and truth. al-Ghazzālī believes that the change occurs in His knowledge. Although al-Ghazzālī says that the changes in words do not affect the meaning, this cannot be a point of departure. For, the meaning in each sentence is clearly different: one reads *"We shall send",* and the other *"We have sent."*

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[72]   al-Ghazzālī, *al-Iqtiṣād fī al-ʿitiqād*, 151.

[73]   al-Ghazzālī, *al-Iqtiṣād fī al-ʿitiqād*, 151-152

[74]   al-Ghazzālī, *al-Iqtiṣād fī al-ʿitiqād*, 152.

[75]   Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazzālī, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa*, ed. Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dar al-Kitāb al-ʿIlmiyah, 2000), 113-122.

Let us continue with al-Ghazzālī's statements. According to al-Ghazzālī, the truth of a message requires a connection with its bearer; which, in this case, is Noah's being sent down to people. And that knowledge cannot be changed in accordance with situation as mentioned in the topic knowledge of God. The phrase of God *"Take off your shoes"* is in fact an indicator of a specific command. And command is a *lafẓ* that requires the addressee to obey, a demand that is born by the One who commands. In order to solve this problem, al-Ghazzālī says, "to make the command take place, it is not necessary for the servant to exist (before his existence). However, before the existence of the command, it could be accepted that the command exists with its owner"[76] And this logical proposition might partly relieve our concerns.

In brief, al-Ghazzālī, tried to come up with counter-evidence and logical propositions to refute the claims that the Holy Book - the Qurʾān in this case - is makhlūq; the claim which resulted from God's being One with His *kalām* attribute and His dialogue with human beings. When doing this, he employs dialectics and tries to answer the very complicated questions that are asked or possible to be asked. Like Ahl al-Sunna scholars, al-Ghazzālī too divides *kalām* into two parts as *kalām-al lafẓī* and *kalām al-nafsī* and proposes that the Qurʾān is the product of the second part, that is, the *kalām-al nafsi.* And in order to refute the claims of createdness of the Qurʾān, he makes an unusual categorization and divides the Qurʾān as *qirāʾah*, what *maqrūʾ* and *lafẓ*-al-Qurʾān. He says that what ḥadith and makhluq is in fact the *qirāʾa (reading Qurʾān)* and the words (lafẓ) in the Qurʾān and he tries to prove that what is maqrū which the meaning is definitely the product of God's *kalām* attribute and qadīm.

Conclusion

Throughout Islam's theology, the issue of the createdness of Qurʾān - which results from the discourse of the denial of attributes and which was first raised as a question by Jaʿd b. Dirham and followed by Jahm b. Safwān and Bishr al-Marīsī, - has been one of the oldest debates raging within the Islamic scholarly circles. When political conspiracies were involved in the issue, the debate became even fiercer and led to bloodshed and torture among Muslim communities causing death to many eminent scholars and persons. The createdness of the Qurʾān issue — said to have been introduced into the community of Islam by some scholars from other religions—stirred up myriad of discussions, debates and disputes among Muslim scholars.

When we analyze the discussions focusing on *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* from the second half of 124 AH until the end of the fourth century (AH), the most substantial contentment one can reach seems to be that many of these debates had been built on fallacious propositions and grounds. One of the reasons why all these debates did not reach a conclusion is that the concepts had not been sufficiently analyzed and the attribution of false or different meanings to the same concepts under discussion. Each group or community attempted to resolve the issue within the framework of their own background, cultural structure and most importantly, their own principles. During the period of about two centuries, the common denominator of the disputes – whether verbal or written— had been the phrase of makhlūq which was accepted as a presumption (by the Muʿtazila). Therefore, the issue of the createdness of the Qurʾān which disrupted the communities at the time is simply the attempts of affirmation or negation of the pseudo conclusion reached,

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[76] al-Ghazzālī, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa*, 113.

rather than examples of an accurate sample. Almost all the discussions within this period had occurred as arguments depicting a speculative approach to support some a priori presumptions.

Although the issue of createdness of the Qurʾān —as a multifaceted issue— is originated in the enigmatic nature of its relationship with revelation, it in fact demonstrates a number of erroneous methods which in turn became the source of its insolubility. Misconfigured methods appear to be the most influential factor in the course the issue takes in time. By erroneous methods, we mean the handling the *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* issue in terms of a dichotomy of 'makhlūq and ghayr makhlūq", which arises from the search of meaning and assuming that each notion has ontologically severe distinctions. The defective reasoning in resolving the issue went even further and it was presumed that word (speech) is an attribute to God.

The emergences of evaluations that are seriously fallacious have a considerable effect on the deadlock of the issue under consideration. While the Qurʾān issue must be handled as "what has been delivered to the Prophet Mohammad" who was the addressee of the revelation, it was considered to be an attribute to God's and within the context of God. Such considerations made it inevitable that *lafẓ* is to be separated from meaning and led to the discussion focusing on whether the *lafẓ* (the Qurʾān we hold in our hands) is created and the believer's contention that the Qurʾān exists with God's nature is uncreated. As a result of this differentation the Qurʾān we actually hold in our hands has been accepted as the figurative Qurʾān according to Ahl al-Sunna, especially the Ashʿariyya and meaning, as the attribute of God, is the actual Qurʾān.

It can be concluded that the speculative analyses mentioned above have become an obstacle that prevents the truth to emerge rather than shedding light on it. Such representations which result in a problem entangled by itself are based on the notion of *mutākallim* shaped in the human mind. In this respect it can be said that set *kalām* aside from *mutākallim*, it makes meaningless the meaning of *mutakallim*. When Ahl al-Sunna and Salafīs, supporters of such views, accept the Qurʾān as *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* pre-eternal with His nature, they agree that the concept of *mutākallim* has its roots in the human mind. Muʿtazila on the other hand, believes that *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* must be thought separately from it, since the *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* is only the object of revelation. However, while Ahl al-Sunna regards *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* within the context of the meaning and the lafẓ together, the Muʿtazila took it only on the grounds of lafẓ and makes an erroneous inference on this attribute and its product (the Qurʾān) within the relationship of the nature of God and the principles of Tawḥīd. Attempting to justify their approach, the Muʿtazila focus on the belief that the *kalām* (described as the source of the true path (hidāyah) of God, creator of everything) was revealed to the prophet. That the world is taken as an attribute negates the revelation.

Within the framework of linguistic explanations employing the *kalām-al lafẓī* and *kalām-al nafsī* –the key concepts of the issue of [un]createdness of Qurʾān—demonstrating the two facets of the same concept, we can make the following conclusions:

The kalām al-nafsī that is perceived by Ahl al-Sunna and al-Ghazzālī as the way of mind allowing speech to be delivered to human beings is as defective as Muʿtazila's description of the problem thoroughly on lexical (lafz) terms, totally ignoring the meaning. As a matter of fact, it is therefore impossible to solve the issue of createdness of the Qurʾān unless the issue is analyzed on the basis of the unity of speech and meaning. Furthermore, Ahl al-Sunna is committing a logical fallacy, if not thoroughly inconsistent, when

they take the issue on the grounds of thinking the ability on human beings just as the Muʿtazila considers the issue as lexical-oriented only to deny the truth. On the other hand, Al-Ghazzālī's explanation that the words mean nahy, Khabar and the alike, are qadīm with God. Yet later this is also problematic. Now that we are not able to comprehend the opinion of Ahl-al Sunna only expresses an instant speculation in human minds. In this design, words are accompanied with meanings. And speech exists after this act. To define God's *kalām* based upon mind and human thoughts is both logically and ontologically fallacious. In order to avoid such mistakes made in traditional discussions Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd (d. 2010) and Mohammed Arkoun (d. 2010), suggested to reconsider the issue from the contemporary linguistic and hermeneutic theory, but unfortunateley their offer was not accepted by other Muslim scholar.[77]

In summary, the following fallacies led to a deadlock on the issue under consideration:

- Ignoring the diversity and difference between Schools, scholar and groups trying to understand and discussed the issue based on their principles and rubrics and fundamental beliefs which they accepted.

- Taking the *God's speech (kalām Allāh)* as an attribute in conjuction and relativeness to God.

- Attempting to define *kalām* on acccount of the dichotomy between word and meaning

- Perceiving that one should take the concept of *mutakallim* as the starting point debating without understanding the arguments of the other schools and scholars

- Handling the issue before solving the problem of different perceptions on the concepts employed, that is, each concept became laden with only its truths and the same concept was perceived differently depending on the groups and schools.

In the context of revelation, although instead of the Qurʾān issue which must be handled as "what has been delivered to the Prophet Mohammad" who was the addressee of the revelation, it was considered to be an attribute of God and within the context of God. The attributes ascribed to God, particularly His *kalām* attribute and the resulting question "Is the Qurʾān created?" have been a deep concern of Islam scholar, perhaps more than necessary. The following sentence inscribed into a tombstone perhaps of the year 200/815 is quite concise to demonstrate that the significance attached to the topic: The Qurʾān is kalām Allāh, revealed and not created, good and bad both come from Him.[78]

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[77] Mohammed Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam. Common questions, uncommon answers,* trans. from *the* French and ed. Robert D. Lee (Boulder 1988), 6; Richard C. Martin, "Createdness of the Qurʾān", *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden–Boston–Köln: Brill, 2001), 1/471.

[78] Arthur Stanley Tritton, "The Speech of God", *Studia Islamica* 36 (1972), 7.

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